

W Y C O M B E
Wanderers raced into the fourth round of the Rothmans Isthmian League Cup on Tuesday night with a handsome victory over Kingstonian which was their third of the season. An excellent second half performance was capped in the very last minute with one of the best goals we are likely to see at Loakes Park all season.

Fittingly, it was scored by Ian Pearson while Gavin Fraser played a major role in the build up. These two, along with Peter Cruse and Alan Phillips, enjoyed tremendous games and revelled in the difficult muddy conditions.

It took the Blues a long time to get into their stride but once they gained confidence, they began to expose the Kingstonian defence with some fine football, all the more creditable on the soft and slippery surface. As well as the goals, Wanderers hit the woodwork three times and while their 3-0 win at Woking last Saturday was fortunate, there was nothing lucky about this triumph — it was thoroughly deserved.

Peter Spittle came in for the injured John Maskell while

Wycombe Wanderers 3, Kingstonian 0

REPORT BY STUART EARP

Fraser continued for Paul Birdseye at right back. An injury to Bobby Davies saw an early substitution but it did nothing to upset the flow of Wycombe attacks after the break.

Pearson's brace brings his tally to 34 this season — a marvellous total. His dribbling skills caused mediocre Kingstonian tons of trouble while Cruse had his best game in a Wycombe shirt. From the start he looked happier than anyone else in the mud and his passing was of the highest accuracy. Young Fraser meanwhile, showed his attacking flair when breaking through from full back and defended tenaciously.

OVERHITTING

Play was scrappy early on with both sides overhitting the ball. John Priestley struggled in midfield and it was Kingstonian, who included three players who had spells at Wycombe — Bill Roberts, Tony White, and Mick Sorenson, who created the first real chance after 23 minutes.

Roberts found Sorenson whose cross was only pushed into the air by Spittle. The ball

fell nicely to White but the West Indian hurried his shot and amazingly side-footed over from three yards — a certain candidate for the 'miss of the season.'

It took Wanderers exactly half an hour to test Loakes Park favourite Dave Collyer when Fraser and Pearson combined to set Mick Hollifield up with a chance. He struck the ball well but the goalkeeper pushed the ball away. From the corner Pearson headed powerfully for goal but saw Collyer again tip the ball over.

These two attacks lifted Wycombe and after Davies had been brought down on the edge of the box, Pearson bent a lovely free kick around the wall and watched the ball crash against the crossbar with Collyer nowhere. The injured Davies was unable to continue until after half time and then lasted only six minutes before being replaced by Tony Horseman. Priestley took over at left back and Pearson dropped to midfield.

Before the break, however, 10 man Wanderers scored an important first goal in the 43rd

minute. Cruse's 30 yard pass found Pearson inside the box. He turned past one defender and was then brought down by Barry Webb. Pearson hauled himself out of the mud to place the penalty to Collyer's right and although the 'keeper got a touch, he couldn't stop the ball entering the net.

The second half was only two minutes old when Cruse again created a chance, with another long ball. Howard Kettleborough headed on and Pearson dived in to head the ball over Collyer but again onto the woodwork.

SAME FATE

Eight minutes later Keith Mead suffered the same fate. Cruse's free kick was perfectly flighted to the far post where the Wycombe skipper headed powerfully against the crossbar.

Kingstonian had their best spell for about 15 minutes which included three corners but it was Wycombe who finished the stronger side.

Substitute Horseman provided extra flair upfront with some clever flicks and nudges and this influenced his team-mates who began to turn on some fine football. One-touch passing movements interspersed with long through balls kept the visitors' defence constantly under pressure while the general build ups, although slow at times, were more accurate than usual.

The second goal came after 70 minutes when Horseman showed his value by sending a lovely pass over the back four to Dylan Evans. He took the ball on and gave the advancing Collyer no chance with a good piece of finishing.

Two 40 yard through balls by Hollifield almost brought goals, firstly when Pearson ran on and was foiled by Collyer and the second which put Horseman through. 'Bodger' tried a first time shot but curled the ball wide.

But Wanderers had their reward in the last minute with a truly superb goal which rounded off a highly satisfactory performance. The build up was a series of 1-2's firstly between Fraser and Evans and then Fraser and Pearson. Eight passes were exchanged in a glorious flowing movement before Fraser sent Pearson through to beat Collyer with the perfect finish.

It was the sort of goal that comes off only once or twice a season and one which is practised often in training. This time it worked beautifully and the crowd showed their appreciation with long and loud applause.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle, G. Fraser, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies (Sub A. Horseman 51 mins), P. Cruse, J. Priestley, M. Hollifield, D. Evans, H. Kettleborough, I. Pearson.

KINGSTONIAN: D. Collyer, T. Smith, T. Withers, T. Mahon, A. Horley, W. Roberts (sub H. Bhatti 73 mins), B. Webb, M. Sorenson, J. Gawley, C. Morris, A. White.

Referee: D. Cullam (Watford).
Half-time 1-0. **Goalscorers:** Pearson 2 (43 pen! 90), Evans (70).
Attendance: 600.

Next opponents

AFTER Tuesday night's 3-0 win over Kingstonian, Wycombe Wanderers are away to one of three teams in the quarter final. Hitchin and Boreham Wood have still to play their second round match and the winners of that then meet Staines in the third round to decide the Blues' next opponents.

Hitchin and Boreham Wood play on March 24 and the winners meet Staines on March 31. Several clubs have still to fulfil their cup matches and there are now 11 teams left in the competition.